

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

November 29, 2012

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MoDOT Scores Two Winners in Top 10 Bridge Awards

by Tammy Wallace

Two MoDOT projects were ranked fourth and eighth in Roads and Bridges Magazine's Top 10 Bridge Awards for 2012. The Top 10 was created in 2000 to recognize the top bridge projects in North America.



The Mississippi River Bridge project connecting St. Louis and southwestern Illinois began in Feb. 2010. The cost of the project is \$692.6 million and should be completed in early 2014. It is co-owned by MoDOT and IDOT.

Mississippi River Bridge (Interstate 70 over the Mississippi River in St. Louis) – Ranked #4

- The two 400-foot towers were completed last summer
- Each of the two tower footings is 24 ft deep, 55 ft wide and 88 ft long
- The main span of the bridge will be 1,500 ft long, with a total span of 2,803 ft
- More than 600 miles of cable will be connected between the towers and the roadway
- This project removes I-70 from the Poplar Street Bridge and relocates it about a mile north
- It is the first bridge built in more than 40 years between downtown St. Louis and southwestern Illinois

Amelia Earhart Bridge (US 59 over the Missouri River) – Ranked #8

- Constructed four units of pre-stressed concrete girder spans
- 527 ft continuous tied-arch span
- Unique flooring system and deck
- Will stretch 2,500 feet and will replace the existing two-lane structure, which was completed in 1938 and was too narrow to handle some of today's larger truck loads and farm implements.
- The extra lanes also will accommodate the greater numbers of vehicles that now pass over the bridge daily.

Each year, nominations are submitted to the editorial staff, who determine the winners based on project challenges, impact to region and scope of work.

"We are honored to be part of the annual Top 10," said state bridge engineer Dennis Heckman. "It is particularly gratifying to have two projects recognized; both as a result of partnerships between MoDOT, Kansas and Illinois."

Here are some of the criteria that placed these projects in the Top 10, and a link to all the 2012 winners - [Top 10](#)



The Amelia Earhart Bridge project co-owned by MoDOT and KDOT, began in May 2009 at a cost of \$60 million. The bridge opened to traffic in Dec. 2012, but incidental construction and demolition continues until the summer of 2013.

Tested in Fire

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

A plane in trouble landed at the Columbia Regional Airport. Flames shot from the engine and fuselage and fed upon fuel spilled on the ground.

That was the scenario facing Cape Girardeau firefighters undergoing specialized training earlier this month. They had the opportunity to practice using the Mobile Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Trainer housed by the University of Missouri's Fire Rescue Training Institute and purchased using Federal Aviation Administration and MoDOT funds. Employees from MoDOT Multimodal Operations Aviation section observed the drill.

"The trainer helps prepare firefighters should they ever face the unique characteristics of an aircraft fire," said Liz Duvall, MoDOT aviation programs manager. "It is built to resemble a small commuter jet and is rigged to



Learn how Branson Airport firefighters and those from Stone and Taney counties drilled with the equipment by watching this [Video](#).

unfamiliar situation.

The current trainer is 12 years old and is showing plenty of wear. A new model that mimics updated aircraft is under construction. It will be delivered next year.

It is important that this training continue, according to Ludwig, "I think of MoDOT's involvement with the trainer as similar to highway emergency response," she said. "It's all about traveler safety. Whether our customers travel the road or the skies, they deserve well-trained emergency responders."

be set afire in several locations. That's important because fire behaves differently in each section of an aircraft."

Observers might have been surprised that firefighters didn't immediately rush to attack the flames, if they'd not been part of the pre-fight briefing.

"The firefighters discussed angles of attack and how to locate passenger exits during classroom discussion," said Amy Ludwig, MoDOT aviation administrator. "During the live test, they observed and conferred again before battling the fire. It struck me then, how different it must be for people who normally fight structure fires to face an aircraft fire."

Most other fire trainers in the US are stationary. Missouri's is mobile. It is hauled around the midwest, reducing trainee travel costs. As a result, more departments can afford to train more firefighters in an

Get Text Alerts Sent Straight to Your Phone

by Matt Hiebert



You can now get text alerts through the E-update system!

Want to be notified about a road closure before you're on the road? Just visit www.modot.org/eupdates to sign up for the service. You don't even need a smartphone ... just one that can receive text messages.

If you already have an E-update account, just login and add your provider information and cell phone number. That's it! If you're new to E-updates, create an account and choose which counties, routes and regions you want to know about.

When there's trouble on a road or region you've added, whether it's weather-related or an incident, our staff will send notifications to everyone who's signed up. You'll get a short message telling you what's going on.

And if you want to opt out of the service later, just log in to your account and remove your cell phone information.

A MoDOT E-update account is required and data charges may apply depending on your cell phone package.

But remember...don't read these texts while you're driving!

What's Happening



More Help for Your Career

Equal Opportunity and Diversity has posted another newsletter in the mentoring series to help employees get their careers on track. This edition – Demonstrating Caring through Commiseration - provides tips on trust based relationships.

Check out the helpful tips - Newsletter
or call EODD for details at 573-522-9482

Commission Tours Base

Members of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission with Director Kevin Keith and MoDOT staff, toured Whiteman Air Force Base prior to the November monthly meeting at the University of Central Missouri. The tour included a defense briefing and a viewing of base assets.

Photo by: 509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs Office



Blanchette Bridge Demolition

MoDOT's St. Louis District blew up a section of the westbound I-70 Blanchette Bridge on Sunday, Nov. 19. This video includes a slow motion version of the demolition - [video](#).

See more about the project on the St. Louis District page - [project](#).

November Retirements

Rodney O'Connell - NW - 30
Gary Lux - NE - 28
Billy Buesing - KC - 24
Sherman Hale - KC - 24

Richard Dodson - KC - 28
Steven Pendleton - CD - 30
Kevin Decker - SL - 34
James Kaucher - SL - 21

Patricia Evans - SE - 26
Dennis Bryant - CO - 29
Kenneth Houseman - CO - 32
Vickie Moran - CO - 25

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

Customer Relations - MoDOT
P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573.751.2840 / www.modot.org

Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Central Office

Mapping the Way to Success

by Holly Dentner

MoDOT was recently recognized with a "best practice" honorable mention at the 2012 Traffic Records Forum in Biloxi, Mississippi.

MoDOT submitted for consideration a tool that's part of the Transportation Management System, or TMS. The tool is a web-based mapping application used by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and other Missouri law enforcement officers. It allows officers to pinpoint a crash location by zooming in and finding its exact spot on the map.

"We submitted the TMS law enforcement mapping tool because it does more than just make it easier for officers to complete their crash reports," said Traffic Safety Engineer John Miller. "More accurate crash reports mean we have the best data to analyze our roadways and it makes our safety programs more effective."



The mapping tool was first developed in May 2011. MoDOT worked closely with the Highway Patrol to make sure it would meet the needs and business rules for their crash reporting.

"Incorporating this tool into TMS made sense for the department, and it took a team of people to make it happen," said Myrna Tucker, who serves as MoDOT's transportation management systems administrator. "I really have to recognize Captain Brad Jones with the Highway Patrol

and Stuart Harlan in MoDOT's information systems division with making it work."

Historically, officers working crashes were required to use a table format list of roadways to complete their reports. While the listing was comprehensive, it was not user friendly and did not provide the visual ease of looking at a map.

The new mapping tool is now part of annual crash report training offered by the Highway Patrol, and is used by 102 other law enforcement agencies around the state.

"This project benefits law enforcement, policy makers, and the roadway safety professionals in Missouri," said Miller. "We believe we'll continue to see fewer errors and improved data accuracy as more agencies across the state incorporate the mapping tool into their crash reporting."

The development of this mapping tool involved a vision for success, ingenuity, and cooperation amongst the agencies involved in its creation. As a result, law enforcement officers in the state now have an effective tool that allows them to do their job faster and better.

State Employees Blood Drive Affecting Lives

A big "Thank You" to all employees who donated blood during the state employee blood drive. State employees once again helped save many grateful strangers. During the drive employees donated 265 pints of blood. The goal was to collect 156 pints.

Each pint of blood can be divided into three components—red cells, platelets and plasma—giving our blood drive the possibility of impacting 795 lives. While it is impossible at the time of donation to know how that specific donation will be used, there are more uses for blood than many people realize. Whole blood often is needed for surgery patients and trauma victims. Cancer patients may also need significant amounts of blood. In fact, more than one million people are diagnosed with cancer each year and many of them will need blood, sometimes daily, during their chemotherapy treatment.

Upcoming drives will be held at the Truman Building in Jefferson City on Jan. 22 and 23, 2013.



To learn more about how donating blood can help save lives, go to <http://www.redcrossblood.org/>

Thank you,

Mason E. Neff I Donor Recruitment Representative
American Red Cross Blood Services

What's Happening at Central Office

Diversity Education Event - What is a Muslim?



Thursday, Dec 6

9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

105 West Capitol - Hearing Room 100

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

830 MoDOT Drive - Blue Conference Room

Informative presentation about Muslims and Islam - Flier

Contact Elizabeth Reed to reserve a seat:

Elizabeth.Reed@modot.mo.gov

573-526-5611

Spinal Screening

Tuesday, Dec. 4

8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

601 W Main (old garage) - Training Room B

Dr. Berlemer, owner of Discover Wellness and Rehabilitation, will be giving free 15 minute spinal screenings, discussing spinal rejuvenation therapy and using the posture screen application.

Screenings will be done every 15 minutes from 8 - 11:45. Click [here](#) for more information.

To schedule a screening contact:

Ashley Woods

Ashley.Woods@modot.mo.gov

573-751-3941

Acupuncture Presentation

Tuesday, Dec. 18

12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

601 W Main (old garage) - Training Room B

Dr. Tang with Health Quest Physicians will be giving a presentation on acupuncture.

Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve functioning. This is done by inserting needles and applying heat or electrical stimulation at very precise acupuncture points.

If you are interested in attending this presentation, please enroll via the Student Center - [Enroll](#) (this link will only work for active employees), or contact:

Ashley Woods

Ashley.Woods@modot.mo.gov

573-751-3941

spinal screening and acupuncture presentation sponsored by the MEE Zone

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Northwest District

New Interchange Planned

A new interchange will be built on U.S. Highway 36 east of St. Joseph to provide access to a new Agri-Business Expo Center, as well as nearby businesses.

"We are so excited to have this incredible opportunity to partner on the Agri-Business Expo," said Don Wichern, MoDOT Northwest District Engineer. "Not only will this project help deliver a better transportation system for the St. Joseph area, but it will help advance economic development for the region and provide for a more prosperous Missouri."

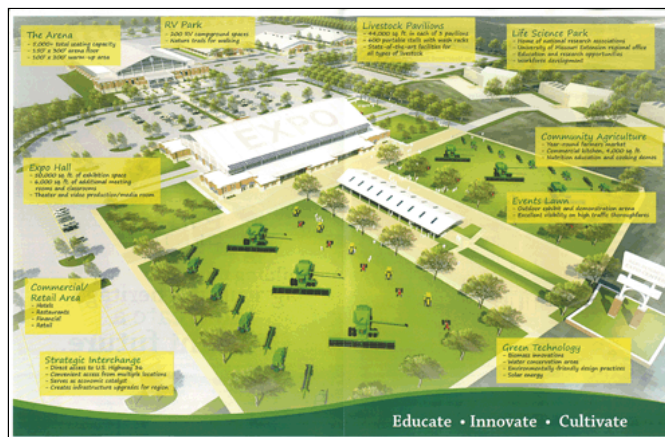
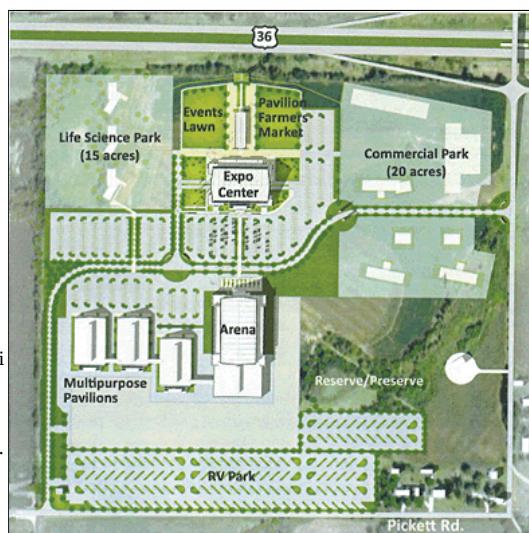
The MoDOT Cost Share/Economic Development Committee awarded up to \$4.9 million to the Agri-Business Expo Center to design and construct a diamond interchange. The exit will be located approximately one mile east of the Riverside Road/Route AC interchange on U.S. Highway 36. Construction will begin in the fall 2013.

The interchange is the catalyst to kick off development of the Agri-Business Expo Center, which will include a Life Science Park for research and education; an Exhibit Park with an expo hall and agriculture arena; and Commercial Park offering hotel and retail development.

"A campus will be built offering education and enhanced quality of life opportunities. Jobs will come almost immediately as the project unfolds," said Marty Grey, chairman of the Agri-Business Expo Board of Directors.

A number of public and private entities worked together to bring the project to Northwest Missouri.

The new interchange will provide safe and efficient access for employees and visitors to the Agri-Business Expo Center, fueling regional growth. The facility will host job training events for people wanting to enter animal health and biosciences. The Life Science Park will draw together leaders in agriculture education, research and business to generate new opportunities. In addition, a permanent farmers' market and demonstration kitchen will open doors for entrepreneurs while the arena and exhibit hall will showcase agriculture achievement.



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Northeast District

Intersections Targeted for Road Safety Audit

A team of Northeast District and Central Office employees, along with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, took to the road on November 26 to conduct a road safety audit on intersections located along the U.S. 63 corridor between Columbia and the Iowa State Line. The team's goal was to look at specific intersections where there have been several crashes within the last few years and determine if modifications could be made to improve these intersections.

"By looking at the crash data we were able to see the most common type of crashes are right angles," said Kevin James, assistant district engineer and one of the safety audit engineers. "After looking at the intersections, the team can determine possible solutions that may be implemented to help prevent future accidents," he explained. "Of course, motorists need to do their part by being attentive while driving and always wearing their seat belt," he added.



Several intersections along U.S. 63 between Columbia and the Iowa state line are being reviewed by a safety audit team to determine what safety improvements can be implemented.

The team plans to get back together in the near future and discuss their findings and possible solutions. They will use guidelines provided by the Federal Highway and Safety Administration.

Around the District...



The NE District has been replacing some of the signs along U.S. 36, like the one above. The 20 ft. wide, 4 ft. tall sign is one of two that was replaced. This is the time of year maintenance focuses on sign replacement work.



Teri Zeiger, customer relations, and Sharisse Nemes, maintenance and traffic, assisted in the statewide employee safety promotion by distributing posters to all work units.

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I-70 / 435 Interchange Wins Award

MoDOT, consultant Delich, Roth, Goodwillie to be honored in February 2013

by Steve Porter

The I-70/435 interchange project completed this spring has won an award in the American Council of Engineering Companies/Missouri 2013 Engineering Excellence Award Competition. MoDOT and engineering consultants Delich, Roth and Goodwillie will not know which award (Grand Conceptor or Grand) we have won until it is announced at the ACEC/MO Awards Banquet in February.

Grand Conceptor and Grand Award winners have the opportunity to go on to ACEC's national competition in February. As part of the awards presentation, all winning entries will be illustrated through a PowerPoint presentation. Also, all winning panels will be on display at the Design Reception in advance of the Awards Banquet, February 16, 2013, at the Crowne Plaza Kansas City - Downtown, Kansas City.



The \$39 million I-70/435 Interchange project under construction. This project eliminates the biggest choke point in the Kansas City Area and has received an award in the American Council of Engineering Companies/Missouri 2013 Engineering Excellence Award.

The \$39 million, two-year project eliminated the biggest choke point in the Kansas City area by adding a third lane of I-70 in each direction, replacing the Blue Ridge Cutoff bridge over I-70 and the Route 40 bridge over I-435, added a new collector ramp system for I-435 to eastbound I-70 and a half-diamond interchange at I-435 and Route 40 to and from the north.

MoDOT, Mavericks Encourage Fans to Arrive Alive

Coach Hillman says, "Make It Click!"

by Jennifer Benefield

As a crowd of 5,800 fans packed a sold-out Independence Events Center to cheer on the Missouri Mavericks during the hockey team's home opener Nov. 3, 2012, Head Coach Scott Hillman delivered an important message at the half:

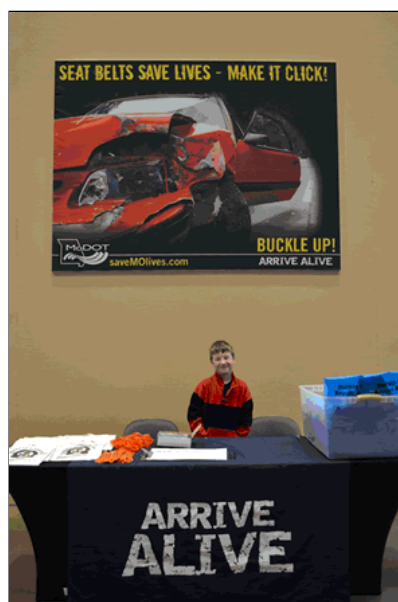
"On the ice our goal is simple – take the shot, and score the goal. But I don't want penalties on the ice, and I definitely don't want penalties off the ice. Make safety your goal to avoid penalties. Make it click. Buckle up to Arrive Alive!"

The new 30-second public service announcement will play at each of the Maverick's 33 home games and be provided to Kansas City-area television stations to incorporate into their PSA rotations. Click [HERE](#) to view the video.

MoDOT and its Destination Safe partners will be attending six games throughout the 2012-2013 season to provide safety information, Arrive Alive swag and answer questions. The first Friday of each month is also Arrive Alive Chuck-A-Puck night where one lucky fan wins a bag filled with Arrive Alive and Mavericks goodies. The March 22, 2013 game is MoDOT Fan Appreciation Night.

"The Missouri Mavericks organization is an outstanding safety partner and the Independence Events Center is a great place to talk to people about driving safely," said District Traffic Engineer Laurel McKean. "Coach Hillman is a respected community leader, and we appreciate that he is willing to set a good example for others by advocating for seat belt use."

Also on display at the Independence Events Center is a bold 6 ft. by 8 ft. fabric sign featuring a crashed vehicle that reads, "Seat Belts Save Lives – Make It Click!" It's a reminder for those attending various events at the Center to buckle up. "We



Brendan Benefield, age 7, helps hand out Buckle Buddy bags to children attending the Friday, Nov. 23 Missouri Mavericks hockey game at the Independence Events Center. MoDOT and its Destination Safe partners will host an Arrive Alive kiosk at six games throughout the 2012-2013 season. Photo: Jennifer Benefield

have had more fatality crashes in Jackson County than any other,” said McKean. “Many of the people who attend events at the Center live in Jackson County. Our partnership with the Mavericks is a great way to reach out to them.”

Planning Study Peaks Community’s Interest

by Kerri Lewis

More than 100 people stopped by a public meeting on Thursday, Nov. 15, 2012 to learn more about the Access Justification Report study being done by MoDOT and the City of Kearney. This study is analyzing the need and identifying the best location for a future interchange along I-35 south of Kearney.

Currently, the only access to the city from I-35 is at Route 92. Even with the designed capacity improvements along Route 92 expected to begin in 2013, the I-35 and Route 92 interchange alone does not have the capacity to support the anticipated growth over the next 20 years nor the traffic from future development. As part of the study process, members of the community were invited to provide feedback about the need and help determine the best location for a potential interchange.

The next steps include finishing the operational analysis to produce a draft AJR and environmental documents. An additional public meeting will be held in winter 2013 with a finalized conceptual report ready to submit by spring 2013.

Currently, no funding has been identified for design and construction of a new interchange on I-35 near Kearney.



More than 100 people from the Kearney community stopped by the open house public meeting on November 15 to learn about the Access Justification Report and offer comments regarding the location for a potential new interchange on I-35 south of Kearney. Photo: Kerri Lewis

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Festive Crowd Celebrates Opening of Route 63 and H Interchange

With the ceremonial cutting of a ribbon, more than a year of work to construct a new diamond interchange at U.S. 63 and Route H near the Columbia Regional Airport in Boone County came to a close on Nov. 16. State and local officials, along with area residents, were on hand for the event.

"We're proud to deliver this much needed highway improvement to the area," said Central District Engineer David Silvester. "The new interchange will make access to the increasingly busy Columbia Regional Airport faster and easier. But more importantly, it will make travel to the airport and along Route 63 **safer**."

Silvester said the improvements along Route 63 are especially important now as the Columbia Regional Airport is working to invest in the airport's infrastructure and its carriers and develop a broader regional impact.

Construction on the new interchange connecting Route 63 and H, along with Log Providence Road and a new outer road system, began in August 2011. The project also included the construction of new southbound lanes along U.S. 63 from just north of existing Route 163 to Route H. Those lanes opened in September, and the former southbound lanes of Route 63 are now part of a new outer road system. The portion of the outer road system between existing Route 163 and Route H is now signed as Route 163.

Four new j-turns were also built as part of the project, and the existing median crossovers at Route 163, Route AB (Deer Park), Old Millers Road and South Rolling Hills Road were permanently closed. The j-turns increase safety by eliminating the need for motorists to cross four lanes of fast-moving traffic on a four-lane divided highway.



This new sign marks the new interchange, complete with two roundabouts, on Route 63 near the Columbia Regional Airport. (Photo by Cathy Morrison)



State and local officials gathered Nov. 16 to cut the ribbon to open a new diamond interchange at U.S. 63 and Route H near the Columbia Regional Airport in Boone County. (Photo by Cathy Morrison)

Assistant Chief Engineer Don Hillis thanked area citizens for their support, which enables MoDOT to deliver important transportation projects such as the Route 63 and H interchange.

"We love cutting ribbons on projects such as this," Hillis said. "We realize the important impact transportation jobs have on local communities. But looking ahead, we're not going to be able to cut as many ribbons on projects as we'd like, because we only have enough funding to try to keep our roads and bridges in as good of condition as we can for as long as we can."

Road Improvements Scheduled Near New Columbia High School

Preliminary designs for a project designed to improve safety and accommodate an increase in traffic associated with the new Battle High School in Columbia were presented to the public on Nov. 14.

The project has three components: resurfacing Route Z and adding shoulders from Interstate 70 to St. Charles Road; building a roundabout at the intersection of Route Z and St. Charles Road; and replacing the Route Z bridge over Interstate 70.

The project, which will be funded through a cost-share agreement between MoDOT and Boone County, is scheduled to bid in February 2013. The work is to be completed in early August 2013, prior to the opening of Battle High School.



Project Manager Mike Dusenberg explains the components of the Route Z project to area reporters.

Activities Committee Honors Veterans, Helps Those in Need



Senior Right of Way Specialist Curt Kolb takes in photos of veterans that were on display in the District Office lobby from Nov. 12-16. Louis Kolb, the father of Curt and Central District Design Engineer Nicole Kolb Hood, was one of the featured veterans. Mr. Kolb served as a master sergeant - artillery with the U.S. Army in the Korean War.

been placed on a Christmas tree in the foyer of the District Office. Central District employees are purchasing and wrapping those gifts, which will be delivered on Thursday, Dec. 6.

The Central District Activities Committee honored veterans during the week of Nov. 12-16 with a display of pictures featuring employees, friends, and family members that served, or are serving, in the nation's military. Twenty-three photos were on display in the Central District office lobby during the week.

The Activities Committee also held a bake sale in conjunction with Veterans Day, raising \$192 for the USO's "Operation Care Package" program. The program provides items such as a prepaid international phone card, snacks, playing cards, reading material and other needed items to nearly 90,000 American troops serving in the Middle East. Every \$25 dollars raised under the program is equivalent to a \$75 package for troops.

The committee is now working with the Jefferson City Chapter of the Salvation Army to make the holidays a little brighter for a single mother with three small children. Special ornaments noting gifts the family wants have



Members of the Activities Committee pose with the Christmas tree they decorated. The tree contains special ornaments noting gifts to be purchased for a family in need. From left to right are Senior Design Technician Liz Berhorst, Senior Design Technician Cindy Kremer, Senior Right of Way Specialist Mary Rackers and Senior Customer Service Representative Scott Smith.

District Happenings

Garrett Lynch, son of Area Engineer Bob Lynch, recently gave a presentation to the Central District management team on his efforts to earn his Eagle Scout award. Garrett's Eagle Scout project focused on erecting a flagpole near the site of the new Hollywood-style Lake of the Ozarks sign that welcomes travelers to the popular tourist destination. Garrett's efforts ran the gamut from raising the funds to buying the 40-foot flagpole and several 8' x 12' flags to securing the materials and erecting the final patriotic tribute. The management team was extremely impressed with Garrett's hard work and dedication, and it appeared his dad was pretty proud, too!



For more info

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Mississippi River Bridge Construction Teams Top One Million Hours

by Andrew Gates



Crews in Illinois and Missouri working on constructing the Mississippi River Bridge and its associated roadway projects topped the one million hour mark in September.

By September 30, 2012, crews had completed 1,012,576 hours of work on construction projects in Illinois and Missouri, including the main span of the new bridge between St. Clair County, Illinois and St. Louis.

Of those hours, more than 23 percent (235,930 hours) were performed by minority construction workers, and just over five percent (52,443) were performed by female construction workers. The Department of Labor has set goals to encourage at least 14.7 percent of the workforce be minority workers and at least 6.9 percent of the workforce be female.

"The main contractors working on the bridge projects have been very diligent in ensuring that we have great minority representation in the workforce of the bridge projects that have started so far. We are continuing to work with them to improve the numbers of female construction workers on projects as we continue through the next 18 months of construction," said Gregory Horn, MRB project director.

Lynette Bryant, a carpenter with Massman Traylor Alberici, cleans the form plates for the tower post-tensioning block-outs. These plates cover the block-outs in the tower legs when MTA grouts the post-tensioning ducts and block-outs.

In addition to the construction workers, disadvantaged business enterprises continue to participate in the construction project. As of September, 113 different certified minority and women owned companies have received 229 contracts as part of this project. Those contracts total more than \$108 million of the project's cost of roughly \$700 million. Goals for DBE participation in federally funded projects are set per project based on the capacity and capability of the available DBE firms.

"Although we are pleased by the efforts made by our contractors so far, we will continue to strive to look for other opportunities to improve our workforce numbers and our DBE participation," said Horn.

St. Louis Employees Contribute to Veteran's Day Parade

Mid-November was certainly a beautiful day for a parade. Approximately thirteen St. Louis employees and family members arrived early in the morning at the Broadway maintenance facility to support our veterans on this honorable day. While waiting for the parade to begin, they met several veterans who they networked with. Hundreds of trinkets were distributed at the parade reminding folks "Don't Text and Drive," "Buckle up," and "Arrive Alive." The crowds appreciated the ice scrapers, chap stick, and key chains. Thanks to the Voice of St. Louis and MoDOT's Military Employee Resource Group for sponsoring this event.

First Blanchette Bridge Demolition Kicked Off With a Boom

Photos by Cathy Morrison

One steel truss span of the 1958 westbound I-70 Blanchette Missouri River bridge was blasted and dropped into the river on Sunday, Nov. 18. The remaining two steel truss spans will be blasted the first week of December. The \$63 million rehabilitation of the westbound Blanchette Bridge reduced I-70 from ten lanes to six lanes on Nov. 4, 2012. The project is expected to be complete by Fall 2013. For more information on this project, visit www.modot.org/blanchettebridge.



Twenty-five pounds of explosives were used to cut the steel members of the bridge truss.



The first section removed was only 350 feet long. The remaining 1,030 feet of steel truss will be blasted in early December.



One and one half million pounds of steel were dropped into the Missouri river. Crews had approximately 48 hours to remove the pieces.

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STONE COUNTY CELEBRATION: Cutting a ribbon to mark completion of a project to four-lane Route 13 between Branson West and Kimberling City are, from left, District Engineer Becky Baltz, Table Rock Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Dave Liebenow, State Rep. Don Phillips, Kimberling City Mayor Joe Schrodt, Stone County Presiding Commissioner Dennis Wood and Southern Stone County Fire Protection District Chief Dave Gyger. (Photo: Bob Edwards)



BUILDING SHOULDERS: Carthage Maintenance Crew Leader Wilber Berry works as part of a crew adding two-foot wide shoulders to Route 96 west of Oronogo. (Photo: Bob Edwards)

I-49 Dedication Dec. 12 in Joplin

by Bob Edwards



History will be made Dec. 12 in Joplin when Interstate 49 between Kansas City and Pineville in Missouri becomes official.

The Southwest District is planning a public celebration and I-49 sign unveiling at 12 noon that day in the gym at Joplin East Middle School, 7501 E. 26th Street. Federal, state and local government officials are expected to participate.

I-49 shields installed along U.S. 71 will be uncovered or turned around to face traffic on Dec. 12.

A countdown to the Dec. 12 event and information about the development of I-49 can be found on the Southwest District web site -- www.modot.org/southwest.

Progress of I-49 in Missouri

U.S. 71 along the western edge of Missouri south of Kansas City -- a distance of 185 miles -- has been upgraded to interstate highway standards, with new interchanges,

overpasses and outer roads.

The transformation of U.S. 71 to I-49 in Missouri has taken decades to accomplish.

Planning for the final series of projects was begun in the late 1980s, with construction beginning in the early 1990s and continuing through 2012. The cost reached nearly \$500 million.

Linking I-49 and I-29

Highway officials in Arkansas and Louisiana also are working to complete Interstate 49 in their states. The first section of highway designated as I-49 was in 1984 in Louisiana.

Taken together, Interstate 49 south of Kansas City and Interstate 29 north of Kansas City will cover 1,630 miles of highway. The interstate corridor will link busy Gulf Coast ports at New Orleans with south-central Canada near Winnipeg, a busy center of industry, transportation, agriculture, mineral mining and energy.

The interstate highway up and down the middle of the United States -- through Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, South Dakota and North Dakota -- will mean less congestion to improve the flow of goods and people. It is expected to attract more commerce from businesses seeking to locate or expand in communities with an interstate highway nearby.

Safety will be enhanced because interstate highway access is allowed only at interchanges, with no more at-grade intersections.

New, Wider Route 13 Welcomed in Stone County

by *Angela Eden*

After a decade of planning and 17 months of construction, the four-laning of Route 13 between Branson West and Kimberling City is done and dedicated.

Community leaders cut a ribbon Nov. 16 to celebrate the milestone for southern Stone County, an area that is drawing more residents and visitors to the middle portions of Table Rock Lake.

The Statewide Major Projects Task Force in 2006 ranked the four-laning of Route 13 in southern Stone County as one of the state's most pressing rural roadway needs.

Pushing continually to have the project funded and placed on MoDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program was Dennis Wood, a longtime business owner and state representative. He is now the Stone County presiding commissioner.

In his remarks, Wood thanked several people for helping move the project forward, including former Stone County Presiding Commissioner George Cutbirth, former Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission member and Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce President Jim Anderson and former MoDOT District Engineer Dale Ricks.

"They put their nose to the grindstone and made it happen," he said.

A video provided by the Southern Stone County Fire Protection District -- and played during one of the statewide prioritization meetings -- was instrumental in gaining a high ranking for the project.

The video, shot from inside the cab of a fire truck, showed how difficult it was to make an emergency run when traffic was thick along the old two-lane highway with no shoulders.

"This road will definitely help us with response times," Fire Chief David Gyger said at the ribbon-cutting, expressing the department's thanks. "It makes it easier. People have a way to get over and out of the way."

State Representative Don Phillips said the widened roadway will enhance economic development for this part of Stone County.

The dedication was held at the Table Rock Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, which worked closely with MoDOT on the public information campaign during construction.

The \$20 million project was completed a month ahead of schedule.

For more info

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

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MoDOT Tests Bridges, Names Winners of Bridge Building Competition

Oak Ridge, Ste. Genevieve and Kennett High Schools Take Top Three

After weeks of work to build the most efficient model bridges, Southeast Missouri high school students put their bridges to the test Nov. 15 at the completion of MoDOT's Ninth Annual Bridge Building Competition. The competition challenges high school juniors and seniors to design and construct the most efficient model bridge using limited materials-15 pieces of balsa wood, thread and glue.

Oak Ridge, Ste. Genevieve and Kennett High Schools received first, second and third place for best overall performance, respectively. These schools received cash prizes donated by the Chapter 10 Transportation Employees Association of Missouri, as well as a U.S. flag donated by U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson.



Watch the competition video at www.youtube.com/MoDOTSoutheast.

In addition, five students were recognized for building the lightest bridges that carried the greatest loads. Winners included:

- 1st - Ethan Seyer - Oak Ridge
- 2nd - Lance Rohde - Oak Ridge
- 3rd - Alexis Wunderlich - Oak Ridge
- 4th - Bryan Otte - Ste. Genevieve
- 5th - Brandon Allen - Greenville

Other awards included the most aesthetic bridge, presented to Joey Pertell of Greenville; and the computer-based electronic bridge award, presented to Tyson Roth of Ste. Genevieve.

Prize donations and supply sponsorships were made possible by the following businesses and organizations: Chapter 10 Transportation Employees Association of Missouri, U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson, Cape West 14 Cine, Three Rivers Community College, Cape Area Engineers Club, Southeast Physics & Engineering Club, Southeast Chapter of the Missouri Society of Professional Engineers, Kirlin's Hallmark of Cape Girardeau, Rhodes Convenience Stores, CiCi's Pizza, Little Caesar's, Panera Bread Company, Coca Cola and the Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.



Visit the [SE District's flickr account](#) to view photos from this year's competition.

MoDOT also partnered with Arkansas State University, Southeast Missouri State University, Missouri University of Science and Technology, University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou) and Southern Illinois University of Carbondale, to offer seniors interested in civil engineering up to \$10,000 in scholarships.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Southeast Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety were on hand during the competition to discuss the importance of buckling-up with the Seat Belt Convincer, which simulates how it feels to be in a traffic crash.

To view videos and photos from the competition, please visit www.modot.org/southeast/talkin_transportation/BridgeCompetition.htm.

Memorial Sign Dedication Ceremony Held to Honor SPC Burnett

On the first anniversary of SPC James Burnett, Jr.'s death, friends and family of the fallen soldier gathered to celebrate the naming of a section of Route 25 in his honor. The event was held Friday, Nov. 16 at Advance R-IV Elementary School.

Senator Rob Mayer sponsored legislation naming Route 25 in Stoddard County from the city limits of Advance to one mile south of the city limits the "SPC James Burnett, Jr. Memorial Highway."

Burnett, 21, died on Nov. 16, 2011 serving in Operation Enduring Freedom in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds caused by an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon NATO Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Combat and Special Skill badge, Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge (Bar, Weapon: Rifle (Inscription: Rifle), Expert), and the Overseas Service Bar.

Burnett's father and stepmother, James and Cheri Burnett, reside in Brownwood, Mo.

Speakers included:

- Ms. Christy Mercer on behalf of U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill
- Ms. Judy Thrower on behalf of U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson
- Senator Rob Mayer, District 25
- Representative Billy Pat Wright, District 159
- Mr. Neal Rogers, Spc. Burnett's Grandfather
- Ms. Cheri Burnett, Spc. Burnett's Stepmother
- MoDOT Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton

To view videos and photos from the dedication ceremony, please visit www.modot.org/southeast/news_and_information/special_events.



Watch the dedication ceremony at http://youtu.be/LiBoqYqQ9_c.

For more info

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Comments & Suggestions

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